

# The Role of Linguistic Experience in the Production of Spanish “Short” Adverbs: Evidence from L2 Learners and Heritage Speakers



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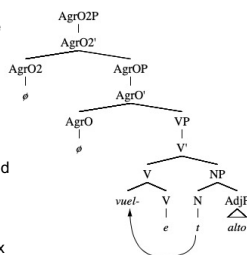
In an elicited production task, heritage speakers of Spanish born and raised in the US show native-like production rates of vernacular adverbial forms (e.g., *ven rápido* vs. *ven rápidamente* ‘come quickly’), outperforming L2 learners of Spanish with a prolonged exposure to native input (e.g., 191 weeks). These results suggest that the type of experience with input in the L2 i.e., “the timing, type, modality, frequency and amount of exposure to relevant input and use of the language” (Montrul, de la Fuente, Davidson & Foote, 2012, p. 88) affects the production of verb modifiers.

## 1. Linguistic Experience in L2A

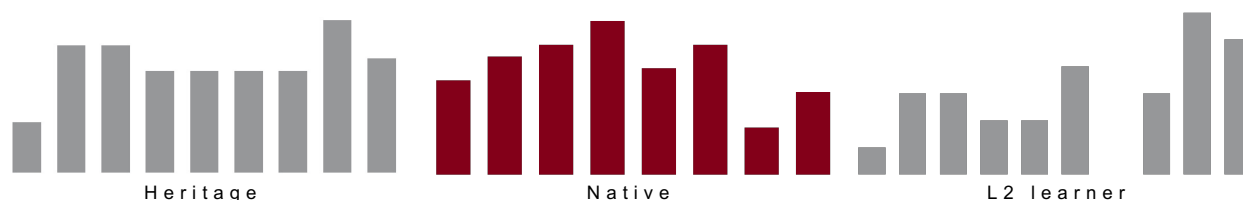
- Two different contexts of language learning --naturalistic vs. classroom-based-- present important differences in the amount and quality of input received by the L2 learner (Flege, Munro & MacKay, 1995; Freed, Dewey & Segalowitz, 2004; Jia & Aaronson, 2003).
- In adult L2A, an early, oral-based experience with input confers certain advantages to heritage speakers over L2 learners in the morphosyntactic domain (Montrul, de la Fuente, Davidson & Foote, 2012; Montrul, Davidson, de la Fuente & Foote, 2013).

## 2. The Syntax of Spanish “Short” Adverbs

- There are two options for verbal attribution in Spanish: a default (m, sg) adjective or a feminine adjective + *mente* suffix (e.g., *ven rápido-Ø* vs. *ven rápida-mente* ‘come quickly’) (Bosque, 1989). The choice is regulated by register type (Company Company, 2012; Hummel, 2014).



- Under the Lexical Conceptual Structure framework (Ramchand, 2008), a short adverb can be interpreted as an unmarked modifier of a noun derived from a light verb [<sub>V</sub>[vol-ar]<sub>N</sub> VUELO]. The “inert” adjective does not need to check  $\phi$ -features in AgrO, V' surfaces in the syntax as a complex verbal unit (V + Adj) (Bartra & Suárez, 1997).



## 3. The L2 Acquisition of Spanish Adverbs

- In the L2A of Spanish, adverbs have been employed in studies testing the V-raising parameter (e.g., *Lucía escribe cuidadosamente sus tareas* ‘Lucy writes carefully her homework’ (Chomsky, 1995; Pollock, 1989). English: S-Adv-V-(O); Spanish: S-V-Adv-(O)
- L1 English speakers are capable of resetting this parameter (Mandell, 1998; Bruhn de Garavito, 2003); implicit negative feedback (e.g., recasts) facilitates the production of correct S-V-Adv-(O) sentences (Ortega & Long, 1997); input frequency facilitates acquisition, not parameter resetting (Guijarro-Fuentes & Larrañaga, 2011).
- Heritage speakers show limitations interpreting “negation-adverb-verb-object” linearizations (Camacho & Kirova, 2018).

## 4. The Study

### 4.1 RQ and Hypothesis

- RQ1:** Is linguistic experience determinant in the production of Spanish short adverbs?
- H1:** Yes, heritage speakers will show native-like production rates of these forms due to an oral-based experience with input, probably outperforming L2 learners.

### 4.2 Participants

- IRB-approved consent form, language background history questionnaire (Cuza & Frank, 2011), DELE proficiency test (Montrul, 2012)
- Native speakers:** N = 8; M<sub>NS</sub> = 39.5 y. o.; self-rated speaking skills: 3.75/4; born and raised in Mexico; all advanced
- L2 learners:** N = 10; M<sub>L2</sub> = 30.6 y. o.; self-rated speaking skills: 3/4; mean length of 46.3 weeks of exposure to native input in Latin-American countries; 6 advanced, 4 intermediate
- Heritage speakers:** N = 9; M<sub>HS</sub> = 28.3 y. o.; self-rated speaking skills: 3.5/4; all were simultaneous bilinguals; 7 advanced, 2 intermediate

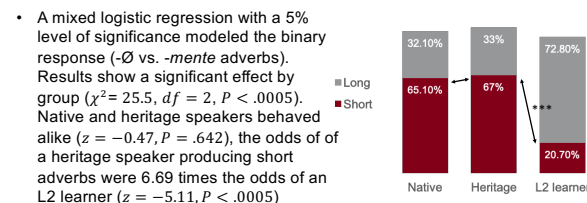
### 4.3 Task

- Oral Sentence Completion Task; 14 test tokens, 14 fillers; A and B versions



## 4.4 Results

- Overall, heritage speakers outperformed L2 learners in the production of short forms (67% vs. 20.7%). L2 learners show a strong preference for Adv-*mente* forms (72.8%).



- Individual results confirm the above trends, while there is more variation among native speakers, the number of “high achievers” is greater among heritage speakers (see graph below).

	Native	Heritage	L2 learner
High (10-14)	4/8 (50%)	3/9 (33.3%)	0/10 (0%)
Mid (5-9)	3/8 (37.5%)	5/9 (55.5%)	2/10 (20%)
Low (0-4)	1/8 (12.5%)	1/9 (11.1%)	8/10 (80%)

## 5. Discussion

- The heritage group shows native-like production rates of short adverbial forms at advanced levels of proficiency > H1 is **CONFIRMED**  
>>> PRELIMINARY DATA <<<
- Limitations:** Increase the number of fillers to avoid learning effects; a controlled environment alters the spontaneous nature of vernacular forms in Spanish > compare variation rates using sociolinguistic interviews

My research seeks to identify similarities and differences among heritage speakers of Spanish and L2 classroom learners. More specifically, I compare the production and interpretation of morphosyntactic constructions in Spanish using experimental methods. If you want more information about this experiment and/or future projects, you can contact me at [amartingomez@uwlax.edu](mailto:amartingomez@uwlax.edu)

